

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) An electrical connector assembly comprising:
 - a first connector element supporting first connector terminals,
 - a second connector element supporting second connector terminals configured to electrically connect to the first connector terminals, wherein the second connector element is configured to be inserted in and mated with the first connector element, and
 - a latch element having a cantilevered flexible portion supported at one end portion and projected to be freely deflectable at a second end portion,wherein when the latch element is inserted in an opening formed in the first connector element in a direction orthogonal to an insertion/mating direction of the second connector element, the second end portion of the cantilevered flexible portion is mated with and latchingly engaged with the first connector element, and wherein when the second connector element is inserted in and mated with the first connector element, which latchingly engages ~~by latchingly engaging~~ with the latch element, the cantilevered flexible portion contacts the second connector element and is deflected to force the second end portion of the cantilevered flexible portion to move in a direction orthogonal to ~~an~~ the insertion/mating direction of the latch element and orthogonal to the insertion/mating direction of the second connector element~~[[,]]~~ so as to release the engagement of the latch element with the first connector element, thereby rendering the latch element movable in ~~an~~ the insertion direction of the latch element ~~thereof~~.

2. (Currently Amended) The electrical connector assembly according to Claim 1,
wherein when the latch element is inserted in the opening, a first recessed portion formed in the first connector element and a first projected portion provided at the second end portion of cantilevered flexible portion are mated with each other to bring the latch element into latching engagement with the first connector element, and
wherein when the second connector element is inserted in and mated with the first connector element, the first projected portion is moved in ~~a~~the direction orthogonal to the insertion/mating direction of the second connector element to allow release of retention of the first projected portion from the first recessed portion.
3. (Previously Presented) The electrical connector assembly according to Claim 2, wherein when the second connector element is inserted in and mated with the first connector element, a lug portion projecting from the second connector element is engaged with the first recessed portion to put the first and second connector elements into mating engagement with each other and the first projected portion retained in the first recessed portion is pushed up in the direction orthogonal to the insertion/mating direction of the second connector element by the lug portion to allow release of retention of the first projected portion from the first recessed portion.
4. (Previously Presented) The electrical connector assembly according to Claim 2, wherein the opening of the first connector element is formed by an aperture between an outer wall formed at an outside of the first connector element and an inner wall formed at an inside of the first connector element, and the first recessed portion is formed as a through hole in the inner wall.
5. (Previously Presented) The electrical connector assembly according to Claim 4, wherein the latch element has a second projected portion that abuts with the inner wall when the first recessed portion and the lug portion are engaged with each other to restrain the latch element from moving in a direction in which the engagement between the first recessed portion and the lug portion is released.

6. (Previously Presented) The electrical connector assembly according to Claim 5, wherein there are a plurality of second projected portions.
7. (Previously Presented) The electrical connector assembly according to Claim 1, wherein the latch element can be retained in and latchingly engaged with the first connector element at a first position and a second position, which are displaced relative to one another in the insertion direction of the latch element.
8. (Previously Presented) The electrical connector assembly according to Claim 1,
wherein the latch element can be retained in and latchingly engaged with the first connector element at a first position and a second position, displaced relative to one another in the insertion direction of the latch element, and
wherein the first projected portion is retained in the first recessed portion at the first position, and the first projected portion is retained in and latchingly engaged with a second recessed portion formed in the first connector element at the second position when released from retention in the first recessed portion.
9. (Currently Amended) The electrical connector assembly according to Claim 1, wherein a front end portion at the second end portion of the cantilevered flexible portion is bent in the direction orthogonal to the insertion/mating direction of the second connector element.